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LET'S READ TOGETHER

THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS™

Based on the Railway Series by The Rev. W. Awdry.

FREE!

THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS

Puzzles · Reading · Colouring

MARVEL COMICS No.272 £1.25
18th Mar. 1998
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Hello, everybody!

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Island of Sodor Railway

This comic belongs to .....

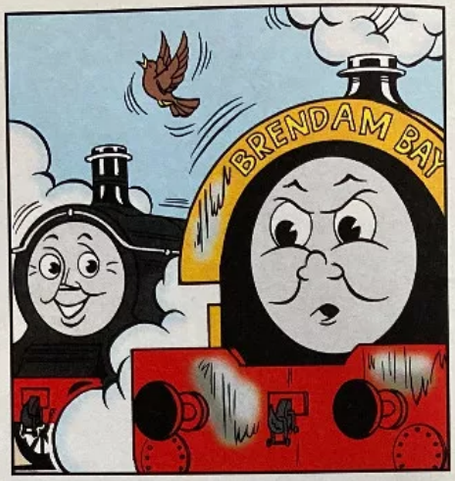
THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS is published fortnightly by MARVEL COMICS, a division of PANINI UK LTD. Managing Director: Miles Stevens Hoare; Managing Editor: Alan O'Keefe; Editorial team: Karen Brown & Kerry Boettcher; Designer: Steve Rawlinson; Production: Mark Irvine; Product Manager: Liz Teale. Office of Publication: Panini House, Coach & Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ. All 'THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS' material copyright © Reed International Books Limited 1998. All television and merchandising rights licensed by Reed International Books Limited to Britt Allcroft (THOMAS) Ltd. exclusively worldwide. 'THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE & FRIENDS' is a trademark of Britt Allcroft (Thomas) Limited. All rights reserved. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions in this publication with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Printed in the UK. Advertising: Roy James, Essential Media. Tel: 0171 833 8030. Subscriptions: MRM. Tel: 01858 410510. Distributed by Marketforce (UK) Ltd., 247 Tottenham Court Road, LONDON W1P 0AU. Tel. 0171 261 5555. ISSN 0954-9390.

Twin Trouble!

1. Carrying china clay from Brendam Bay was dusty work for Bill and Ben, the Saddle-tank engine twins. But it was Really Useful so they didn't mind and were always ready for fun.

2. The Scottish twins, Donald and Douglas, also liked jokes. One day, they had just been washed in the Main Station yard when Bill and Ben arrived, carrying loaded trucks.

3. “Och! A pair of ghost trains!” teased Donald, rolling his eyes. “It’s enough tae make my wheels go wobbly!” chuckled Douglas. “It’s not our fault!” frowned Bill, sulkily.



4. “We can’t help getting dust on us,” added Ben. “It’s a shame you don’t look like us,” laughed Donald and Douglas whose dark paint shone. “Admit it. We’re very smart!”

5. “Well, they won’t outsmart us!” Bill whispered, mischievously. “I’ve heard enough! It’s time we put that puffed-up pair in their place.” Bill explained his naughty plan to Ben.

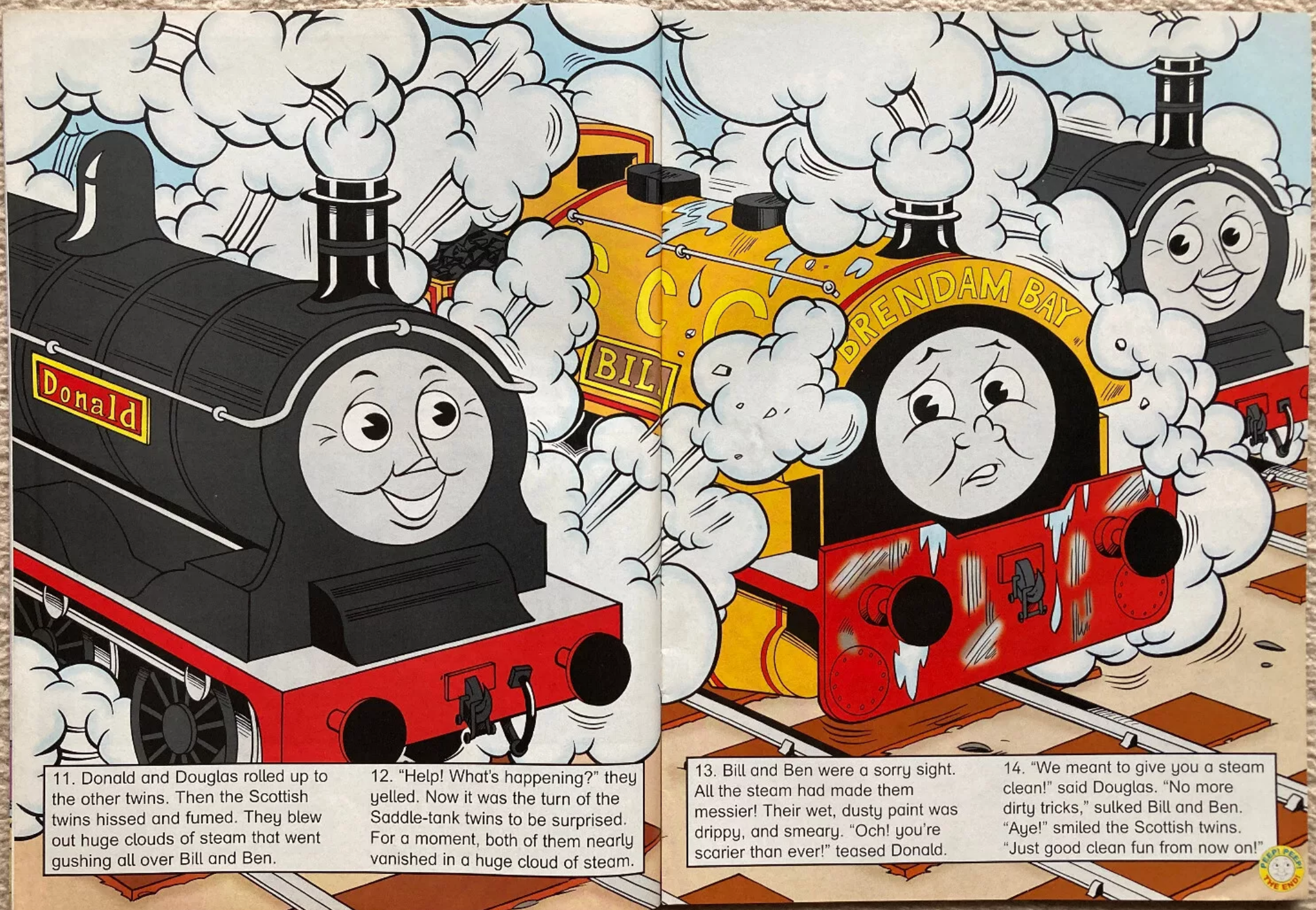
6. Next moment, they both raced up either side of Donald and Douglas. Bill and Ben braked hard, spilling china clay accidentally on purpose! It sent a cloud of dust everywhere.

7. Donald and Douglas were really startled. The dust settled over them before they even realised it. “If you ask me, your paint was far too dark and shiny!” Bill chuckled.

8. “Who’s a scary pair of Scottish spooks?” teased Ben. “At least your paintwork is brighter now!” Donald and Douglas fumed. “That was a dirty trick to play!” they spluttered.

9. The Scottish twins had dust in their eyes and down their funnels. So they were washed again. Next day, Bill and Ben pulled an extra long china clay train into the yard.

10. They were dusty as usual. The Scottish twins watched them, quietly. “They won’t dare to tease!” said Bill. “If they do, they know what to expect,” laughed Ben.



11. Donald and Douglas rolled up to the other twins. Then the Scottish twins hissed and fumed. They blew out huge clouds of steam that went gushing all over Bill and Ben.

12. "Help! What's happening?" they yelled. Now it was the turn of the Saddle-tank twins to be surprised. For a moment, both of them nearly vanished in a huge cloud of steam.

13. Bill and Ben were a sorry sight. All the steam had made them messier! Their wet, dusty paint was drippy, and smeary. "Och! you're scarier than ever!" teased Donald.

14. "We meant to give you a steam clean!" said Douglas. "No more dirty tricks," sulked Bill and Ben. "Aye!" smiled the Scottish twins. "Just good clean fun from now on!"

PEEP! PEEP! THE END!

Travel with Thomas!

18 lucky readers will win one of these super travel sets from Heart!

Have you always got things to carry? You'll love this brilliant bumbag!

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If you'd like to win one of these terrific Thomas travel sets just tell us:

What colour is the Fat Controller's car?

A Red **B** Blue **C** Green

Heart Fashions and Designs stock over 200 Thomas products in their mail order catalogue. For your FREE copy, telephone 01543 377182, quoting reference 272, or write to them at the competition address below.

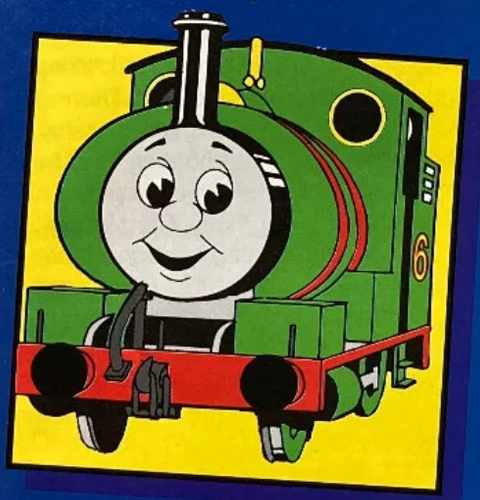
Send your answers on a postcard along with your name, age and address to: Thomas #272 competition, Heart Fashions and designs, 37a High Street, Walsall Wood, W. Midlands, WS9 9LR.

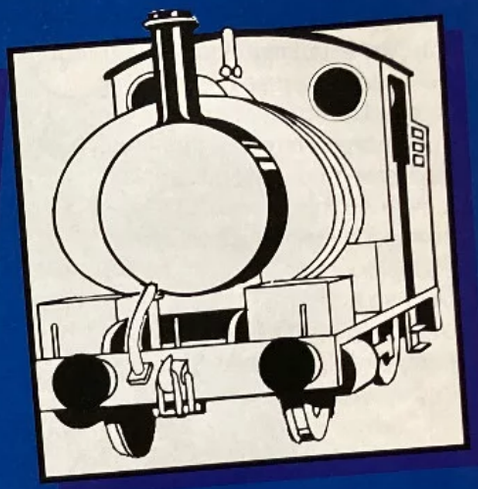
All entries must be received by 26th March 1998.

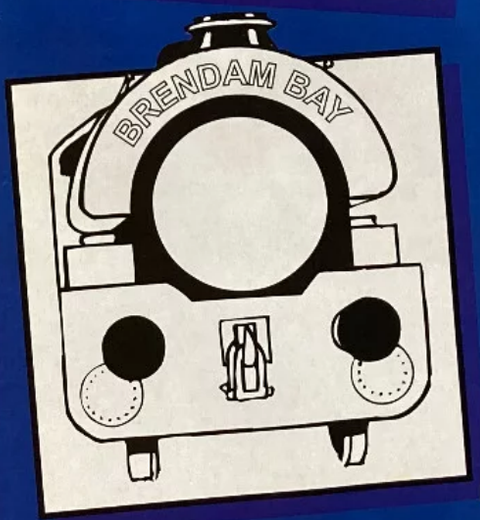
This competition is open to all readers other than employees and their families of participating companies. We cannot accept any responsibility for prizes lost or damaged in the post. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence shall be entered into.

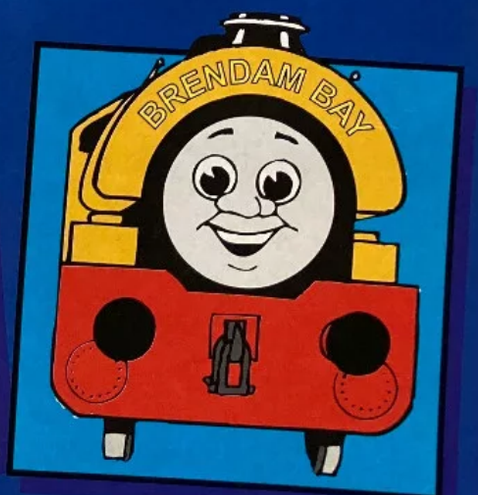
Funny Faces!

Can you see what's missing from Percy and Bill? Complete the pictures and then colour them in!









The Smugglers!

Duck always felt very lucky to have his own branch line along the coast. There was always something interesting to see. But one day, while puffing along a river that led down to the sea, something caught his eye that puzzled him.

Among the reeds, there was a little green boat, disguised with leaves so that it almost blended in completely with the background. "Why would people want to hide a boat so carefully?" asked Duck, back at the station. "Perhaps you imagined it," yawned Gordon. "I know," whispered Thomas, excitedly, "it must be smugglers!"

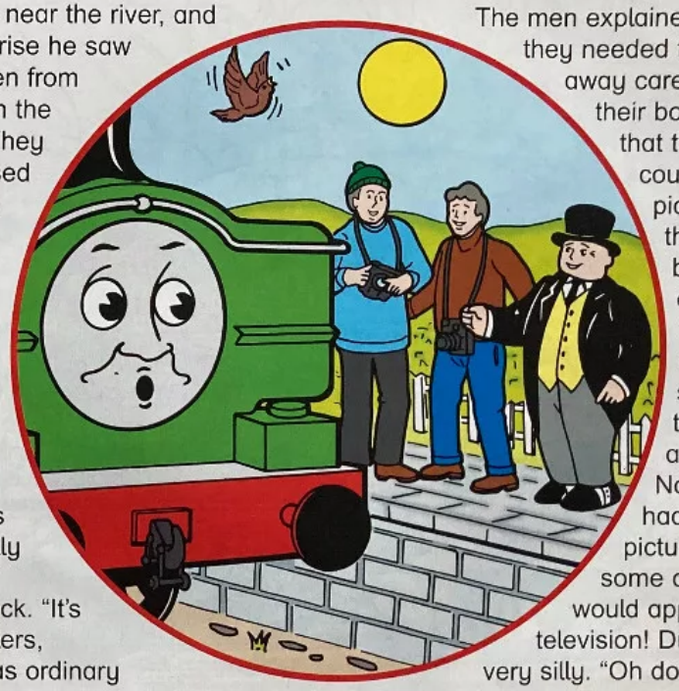
Thomas told Duck that smugglers were people who crept around at night, secretly bringing stolen things into the country, like treasure! "Keep your eye out for them," said Thomas.

The next day, Duck was passing by very early in the morning, and he saw two men, dressed all in green, with green woolly hats. They were creeping very quietly through the reeds down to the boat. Then he saw them set off down the river, as quietly as can be. Very mysterious!

All that week Duck looked out for the smugglers. They were very hard to spot, but he sometimes caught a glimpse of them lurking in the reeds, or hiding in their boat.

When James heard about it, he said, "I wouldn't stand for any smugglers on my line! Why don't you catch them?"

The next night, Duck pulled in at the station near the river, and to his surprise he saw the two men from the boat on the platform. They were dressed in ordinary clothes, and they were both carrying very expensive cameras. One man was still wearing his green woolly hat. "Oho!" thought Duck. "It's the smugglers, disguised as ordinary people! And that's what they must have been smuggling...cameras! But one has made a silly mistake - he's still wearing his smuggler's hat!"



Duck could hardly believe it when the smugglers got on board his train. He was so excited that he nearly burst his boiler getting back to the Main Station.

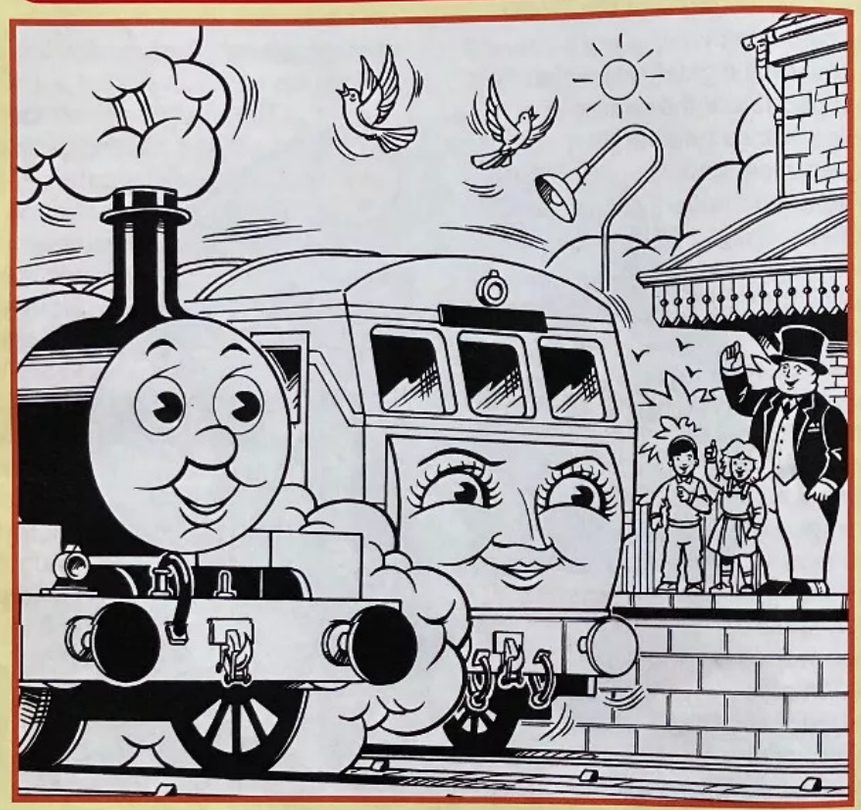
When he arrived, he saw the Fat Controller. "I've got them! I've got them!" Duck shouted. "Look, here they are!" he cried, as the two men got off with their cameras. "Yes, you have got them, Duck!" smiled the Fat Controller. "But there is no need to get so excited about two wildlife photographers!" Duck couldn't believe his ears.

The men explained that they needed to hide away carefully in their boat so that they could take pictures of the rare birds down by the river, without scaring them away. Now they had a lot of pictures, some of which would appear on television! Duck felt very silly. "Oh don't tell the other engines, please!" he said.

Later that day, James came puffing into the station. "Any news about Duck? Did he catch the two mysterious men?" "Well," said the Fat Controller, "he brought them straight into the Main Station, right into my hands!" And he winked at Duck, who steamed quickly away before James could ask!

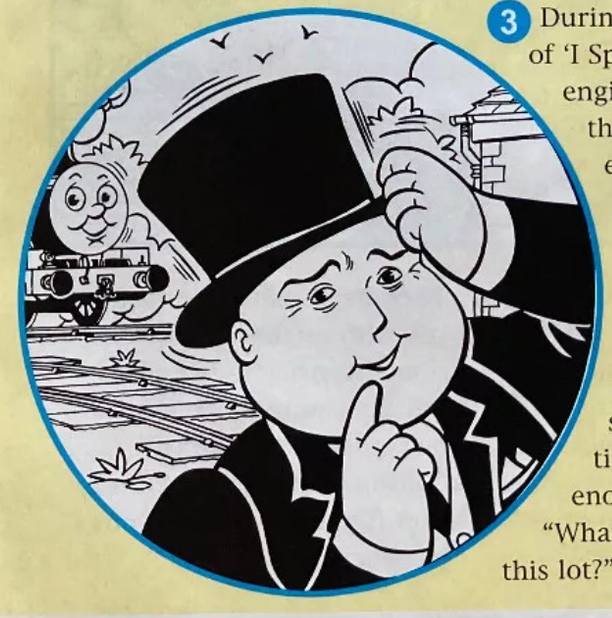
A read & colour story

I Spy with my little eye!

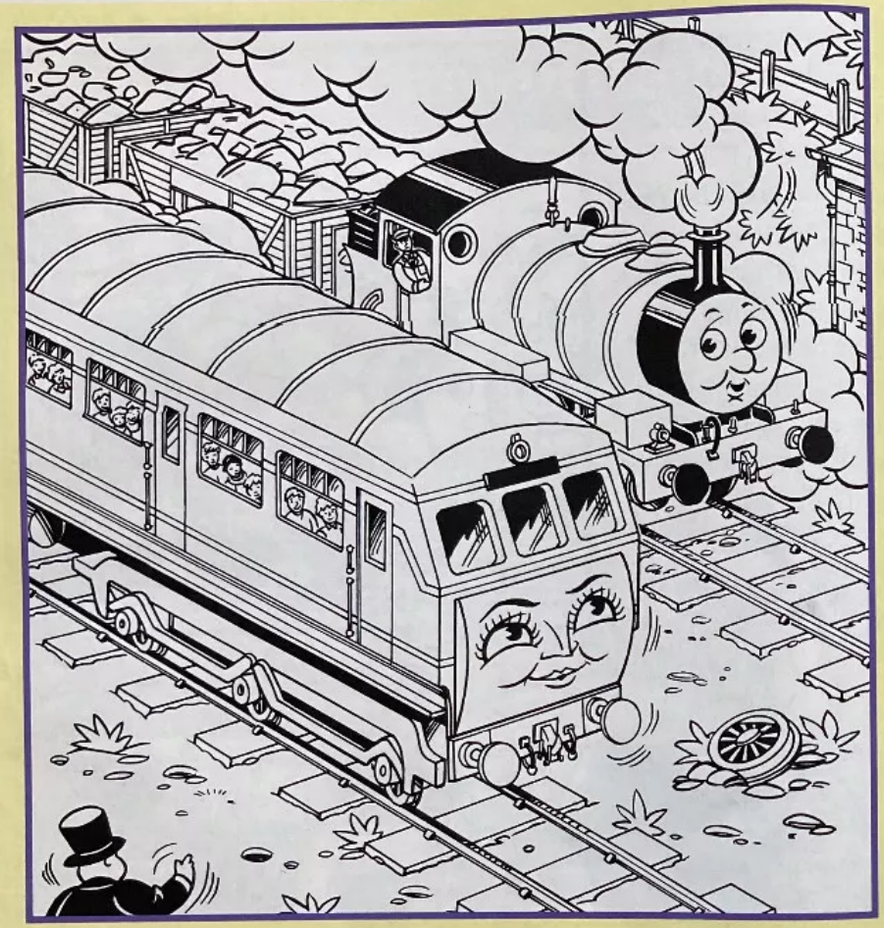


1 One bright morning at Wellsworth, Daisy overheard two children playing 'I Spy'. "That's a good game!" she tooted, "I want to play!" Just then, Percy pulled in and Daisy called to him, "Come on Percy, will you play a game of 'I Spy' with me? I spy with my little eye something beginning with W!" she began, playfully. "Windows!" guessed Percy. At that moment the Fat Controller appeared. "Wrong, Percy!" he said firmly, "W is for work, now off you go!

2 Percy grinned as he pulled away. "That's a very good game, Daisy!" he peeped. Then he ran into Henry at a signal. "I spy with my little eye something beginning with S!" whistled Percy. "Not that old game!" groaned Henry, "It's got to be signal!" Percy grinned. "Well done, Henry, now it's your turn!"



3 During the day, the game of 'I Spy' spread from one engine to another, and that evening four engines were playing it at the Main Station. By now the Fat Controller was getting worried. He thought that his engines were spending too much time playing and not enough time working. "Whatever will I do with this lot?" he said to himself.



4 Then he had an idea. "My turn!" he announced, "I spy with my little eye something beginning with T!" Percy piped up, "T is for trucks!" The Fat Controller grinned, "Exactly, Percy! Now take your trucks off to the sidings!" Then he had another turn. "I spy with my little eye something beginning with P!" Daisy answered, "That must be passengers!" The Fat Controller said, "Good, Daisy! Now please don't keep your passengers waiting!"

5 Later, Thomas and Henry saw the Fat Controller wasn't wearing his hat. Thomas winked at Henry and said, "I spy with my little eye something beginning with H!" Henry laughed, "I've got it, it's hat!" The Fat Controller was puzzled. "Well I can't see a hat and I haven't seen mine all afternoon!" he muttered. "It's behind the ice-cream sign!" peeped Thomas. "Well done, Thomas! I'm glad my engines play Really Useful games in their spare time!"

The end

Crazy Colouring!

James loves to watch the children playing crazy golf! Now why don't you colour in this fun scene!

A hole in one!

The Fat Controller decided to take the morning off work to play golf with the manager of Bertie's bus depot.

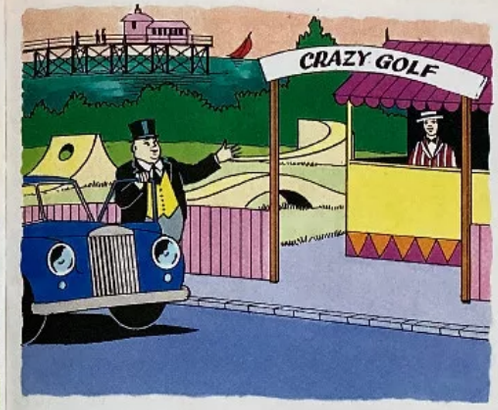
At midday, Lady Hatt arrived with Stephen and Bridget to collect him. But the Fat Controller had not quite finished. He was about to play the final hole of the golf course.

From near the club house,

Stephen and Bridget watched with their grandmother.

The Fat Controller took a big swing with his golf club. CRACK! He hit the ball very hard. It soared into the air towards the hole, marked by a flag, on the green. Closer and closer came the ball. There was a dull "THUD!" as it landed. Then the ball rolled a short way and dropped right into the hole, in the middle of the green. "Oh, good shot!" said Lady Hatt. "A hole in one!"

Everyone was amazed, especially the Fat Controller. He



was still talking about it to the children as Lady Hatt drove them all home from the golf course. "I've never done that before," the Fat Controller smiled, happily. "Getting a hole in one must be really hard," said Stephen. "I'd really like to try," added Bridget.

The return journey took them along the seafront. Lady Hatt spotted a special attraction. "Now's your chance, Bridget, look!" she smiled, parking the

car outside a crazy golf course. "Wow! Great!" cried both of the children, excitedly.

Soon they were enjoying a round of crazy golf while the Fat Controller did his best to give them golfing tips. "Hitting the ball into the hole is much more difficult than I thought," groaned Stephen. "That was more like a hole in ten!" Bridget teased him. "I think you both need lots more

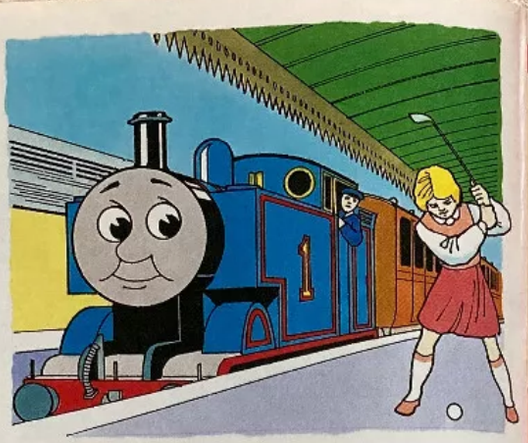
practice," laughed the Fat Controller. "How, grandpa?" asked Stephen. "We're too young to join your golf club and it's too far to keep coming here."

The Fat Controller thought for a moment then he led the way to a gift shop near the beach. He bought Stephen and Bridget two plastic, toy golf clubs and a soft, sponge-rubber ball. "Now you can practice as much as you like in our garden," he told them.

The children could hardly wait to get home. First, however, the Fat Controller had to visit the Main Station to make sure his railway was running well.

When they all arrived, they saw their friend Thomas standing by the platform. He was about to take his afternoon passenger train. Stephen and Bridget went to show Thomas and his driver their toy golf clubs and ball. "Watch me use this golf club, Thomas," said Bridget. "Don't worry, I'll only pretend to to hit the ball," she smiled.

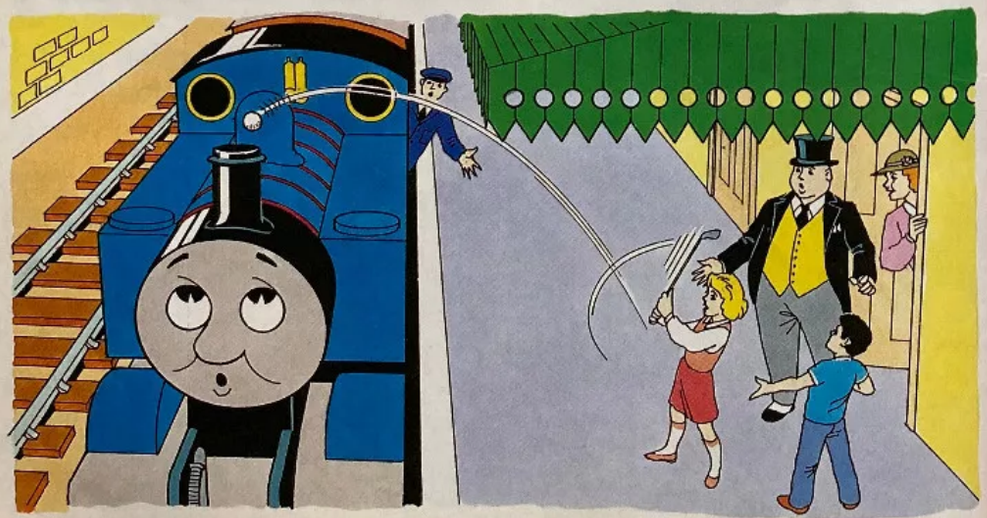
Bridget put the sponge-rubber golf ball down on the platform then swung her club. But, oops! Bridget hit the ball, by mistake. It flew high into the air then dropped straight into poor



Thomas' funnel. Thomas was quite surprised!

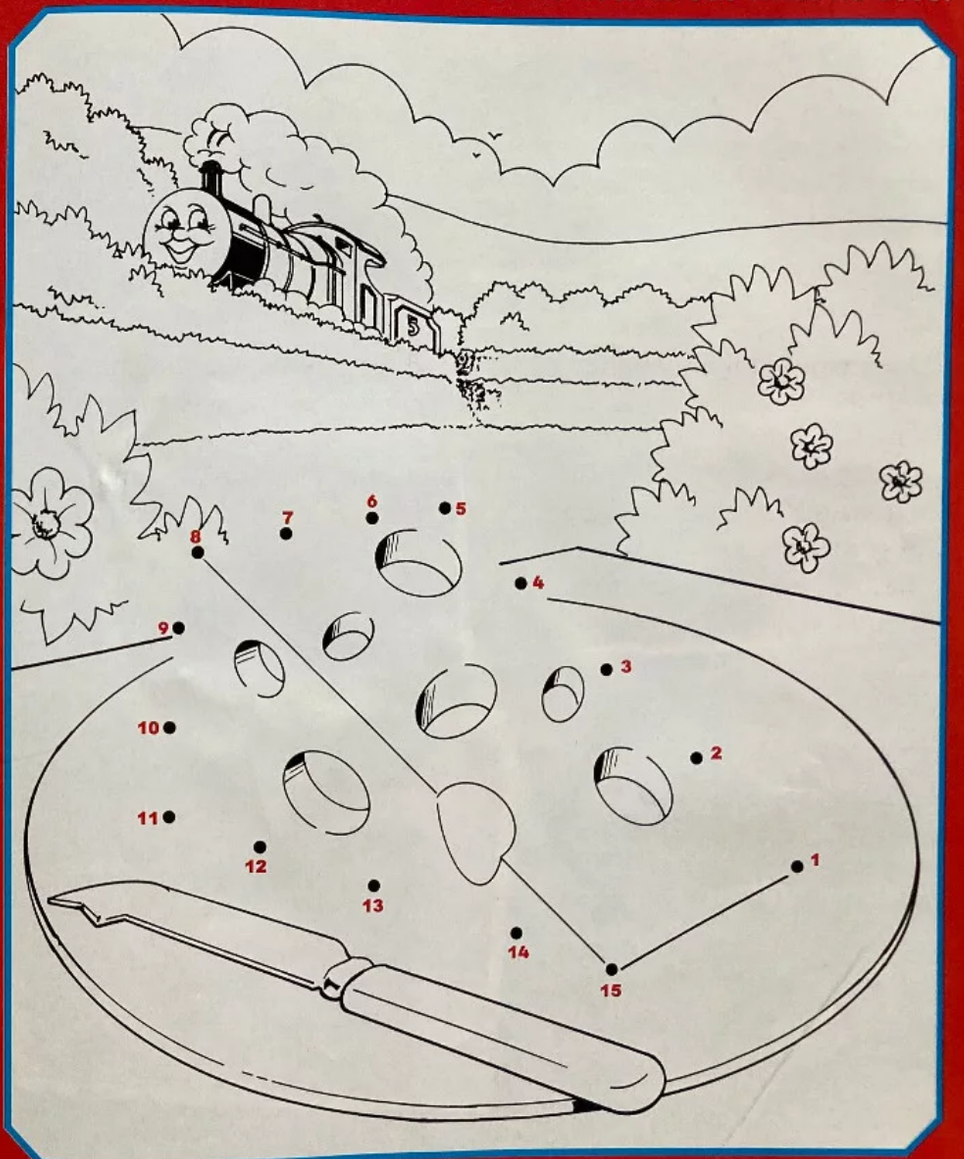
Next moment, he puffed hard and the ball blew out again. "Thank you, Thomas," laughed Bridget. "I did score a hole in one, after all." "You mean a **funnel** in one," joked Stephen.

The End



Dot to dot!

James chuffs past with ease. Join the dots to see what he sees!

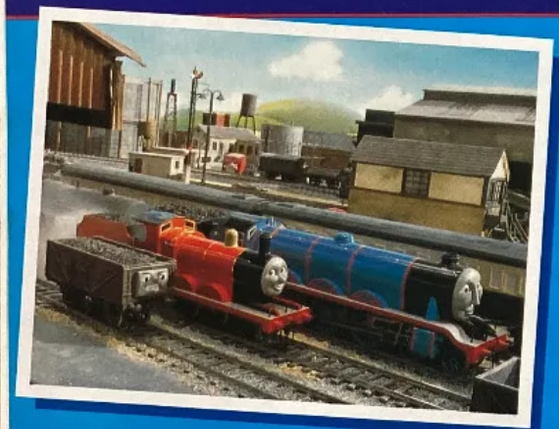


Now count how many flowers are in the picture!

Trust Thomas!

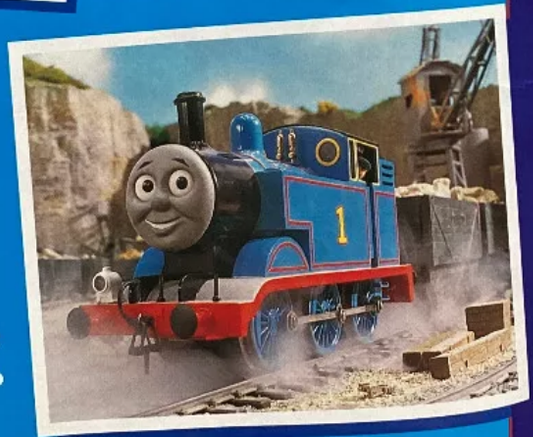
Based on *The Railway Series* by the Rev W Awdry.

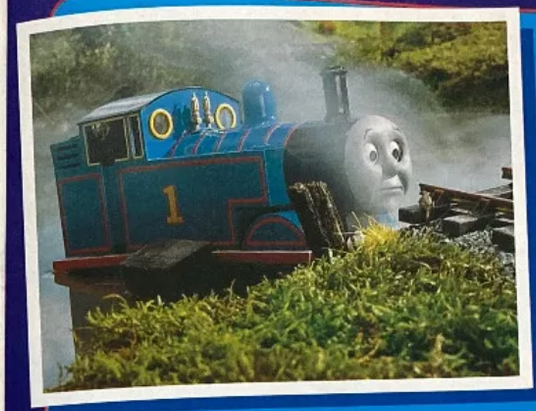
One splendid day Thomas saw Bertie the bus. "Care for a race, Bertie?" he asked. But all Bertie said was, "Ouch! That's another hole in the road." "Poor Bertie," said Thomas. "If you were a steam engine, you'd run on a pair of reliable rails!" "The railway was supposed to deliver tar to mend the road two weeks ago. You can't trust a thing that runs on rails," complained Bertie.



1 "You can trust me, Bertie. I'll find out what's happened." Thomas made his way to the big station by the sea. James was there moaning about his trucks. Gordon suggested that he pretend to be sick so that he wouldn't have to work.

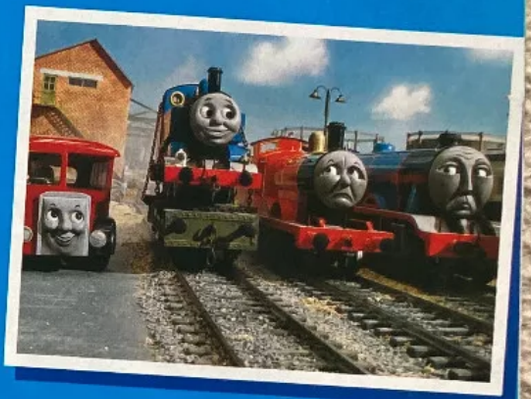
2 When James saw Thomas he started to pretend that he was sick. "Don't worry, I'll help out," said Thomas. Gordon and James sniggered. James' trucks were coupled behind Thomas and he set off for the quarry. The trucks were cross with James but decided to play tricks on Thomas instead.





3 The trucks sped up and pushed Thomas into a muddy pond. Edward helped Thomas back onto the track. Suddenly Thomas remembered the missing tar. He told Edward about it. "There's a truck full of tar at my station. Driver will make sure it gets to Bertie now," said Edward.

4 Later, James and Gordon spoke to Thomas. "We're sorry about your accident, we didn't mean to get you in trouble." Then Bertie arrived. He looked much more cheerful. "My road's being mended now. Now I know I can trust an engine, especially if his name is Thomas!"



In Thomas the Tank Engine & Friends next time, you can read the story "Boco the Diseasel."

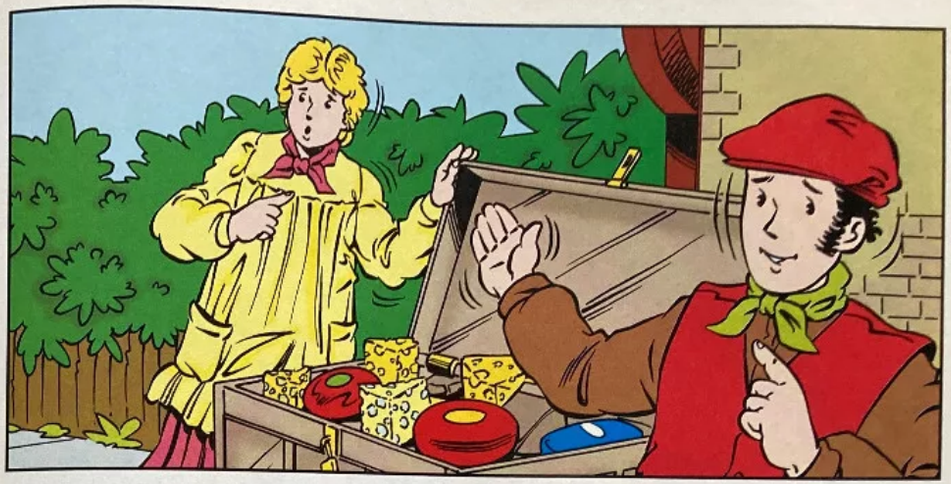
Win a model of Thomas!

Five lucky winners can win a splendid model of Thomas from the ERTL engine range!
Just send a postcard, with your name, age and address to: Thomas/272 model competition, Marvel Comics, Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ.
Closing date: March 26th 1998.

James and the Cheese!

1. Very early in the morning, James pulled into a station and saw a man and his wife on the platform. They had a big trunk with them and James looked at it suspiciously.

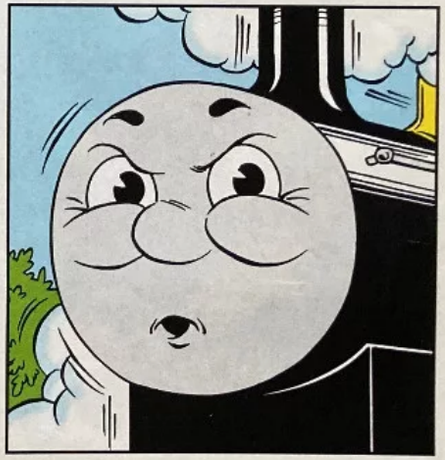
2. Then he smelt it and screwed his nose up! James was not a happy engine. "I hope that smelly trunk isn't for me, this isn't a goods train, you know!" he huffed.



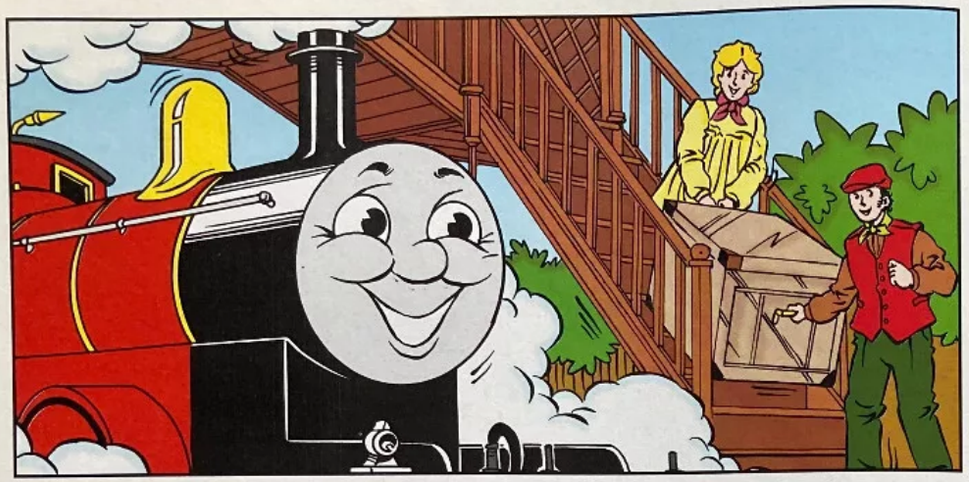
3. The people told James and his driver they were cheese-makers going to the market. They had a trunkload of cheese to sell. "Sorry to bother you!" said the woman.

4. "It's an emergency, our van has broken down!" she said. "We don't want to let our customers down. They rely on us. You're our only chance of getting to market today!"

5. James' driver understood. "Load up your cheese in the guard's van and climb aboard. You mustn't let your customers down! We don't, do we James?" he said, with a wink.

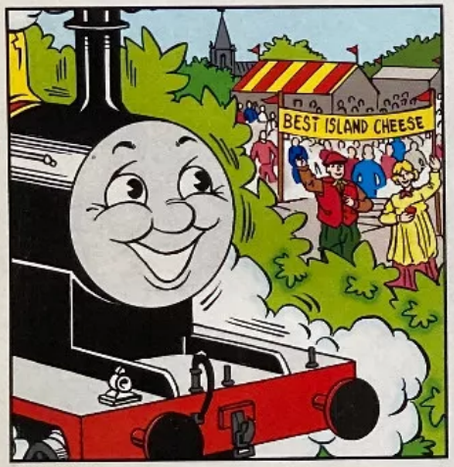


6. The trunk was loaded and they set off for Tidmouth market. On the way, James moaned about the cheese. "That horrible smell is bad for my image!" he muttered, loudly.



7. At Tidmouth the cheese-sellers unloaded their trunk and a very relieved James called out, "I hope you sell it all, we don't want that smell on the way back home!"

8. The couple grinned. "No problem, our cheese sells like hot cakes!" joked the woman, and James cheered up as the smelly trunk was carried off over the footbridge!



9. Later, James passed the market but he couldn't see his new friends so he whistled. They heard him and waved back, calling, "Don't worry, James, it's nearly all gone!"

10. That evening, the cheese-sellers were back on the platform. James pulled in and they started to chat. "We've got three rounds of cheese left!" James shuddered!

11. Just then the Fat Controller appeared with a big smile on his face. "Cheer up, James!" he said, and then he turned to the cheese-sellers, "I'll buy those last three cheeses off you. I was thinking of inviting some friends around tonight for a cheese and wine party and this settles it!" The man and his wife grinned as they handed over the cheese. So did James!

12. "Thank you for letting us use your railway!" said the man. The Fat Controller smiled back. "We're a Really Useful railway and my engines like to be Really Helpful!" he said, proudly looking at James. James nodded and grinned. "All the same, I'm glad I don't have to carry any cheese back. I'm a smart engine and I do have my reputation to think of!" he said.

The mail train!

Please send your letters, pictures and drawings to Mail Train, Thomas, Marvel Comics, Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5UJ.

Star Letter

Dear Fat Controller,
At my village library in France there was an exhibit on steam trains. I brought all my Thomas books and some models to show the library lady. She even showed my video. Now lots of my French friends know about Thomas and it helped them to learn about steam railways!

Luke Heron, aged 5.

That sounds splendid, Luke! Thomas says "Peep, Peep" to all his new friends in France!

If we print your STAR LETTER, you will receive a Branchline Playtrack as a prize!

3 year old Mark Padden painted this picture of Gordon, using his free paint sponges!

Prize Poem!

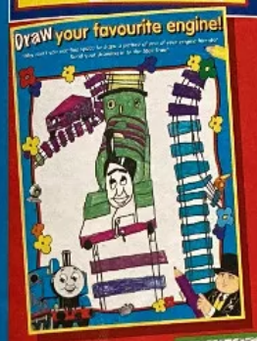
7 year old Adam Hickey wins a prize for his super poem!

Thomas steams along the line,
Annie and Clarabel run behind.
Fireworks flash up in the sky,
The Fat Controller waves goodbye.
A signal went up and down,
Thomas is waiting on the ground.
Percy toots on his way,
And hopes that Thomas has a happy day.

Happy Birthday

To: Jack Bamfield, aged 5, Scott Montgomery, aged 4, James Mackie, aged 6, Nicholas McRoberts, aged 3, William O'Neill, aged 3, Tim Brody, aged 5 & Mark Mountfield, aged 4!

Anyone who has a drawing printed on this page will win a set of special Thomas Glitter Stickers.



Thank you to 10 year old Christopher Signore for sending in this picture of little Percy, his favourite engine! It certainly deserves a prize!

Thomas and Percy are keeping dry inside the shed. It's by Sebastian Ayling, from Hertfordshire.

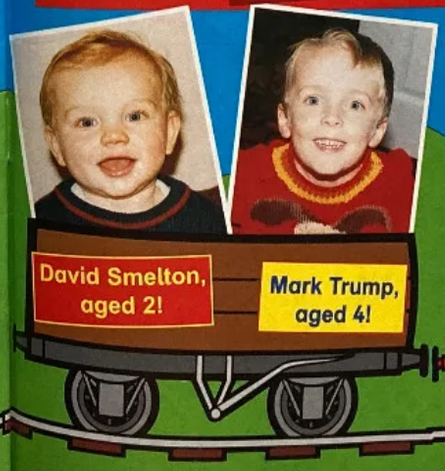
Percy's Jokes!

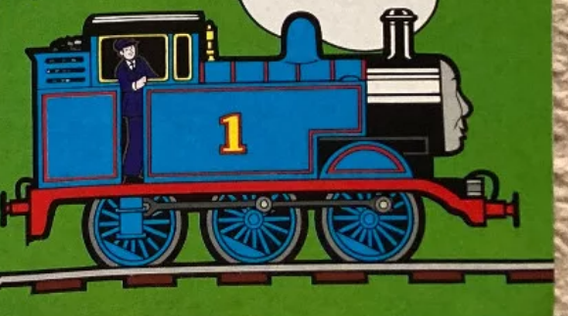
Have you got a favourite joke or funny story? Why not send it to Percy?

What does Thomas eat for breakfast?
Corn puffs!
Daniel Fox, aged 4!

Why is it cheap to feed a giraffe?
A little goes a long way!
Beth McDonough, aged 5!

What do you get if you cross a cow with a duck?
Cream quackers!
Damien Edsall, aged 3!





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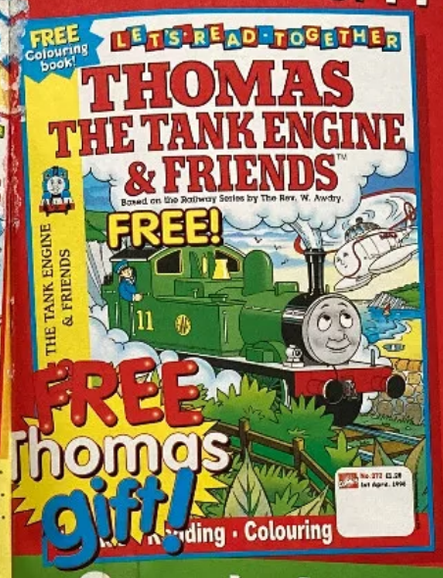
In issue 273 of . . .



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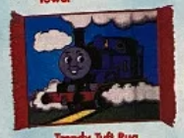

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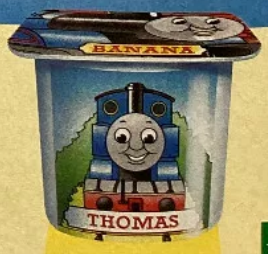
"Peep! Peep! Here comes the train!
And into the tunnel it goes!"



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